

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 190020
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:S/S-O:SVALERGA

APPROVED BY:S/S-O:SVALERGA

-----108228 272153Z /70

O 272107Z JUL 78 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 190020

NODIS

PASS TO S/S FOR THE SECRETARY

FOLLOWING REPEAT DAKAR 5689 ACTION SECSTATE JUL 27.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L DAKAR 5689

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM DICK MOOSE

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: SOMALIA MILITARY SURVEY TEAM

1. I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO HAVE MY VIEWS ON THE SOMALIA SURVEY TEAM QUESTION BEFORE THE FORTHCOMING PRC MEETING ON THAT SUBJECT. SINCE OUR LAST FORMAL CONSIDERATION OF A POSSIBLE MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMALIA NOTHING HAS HAPPENED WHICH IN MY VIEW WOULD JUSTIFY A REVERSAL OF THE DECISION TO PROCEED VERY CAUTIOUSLY IN THIS AREA. DESPITE OUR SEVERAL EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN TO SIAD I HAVE SEEN NOTHING WHICH WOULD INDICATE A SENSITIVITY ON HIS PART TO OUR CONCERNS. WHILE HE TELLS VARIOUS INTERLOCUTERS THAT HE MUST HAVE TIME TO REDUCE HIS SUPPORT TO THE WSLF, I HAVE SEEN NO REPORTS
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WHICH WOULD INDICATE THAT HE IS TRYING TO DO SO. MEANWHILE, THE INCREASED LEVEL OF WSLF ACTIVITY HAS APPARENTLY BROUGHT THE ETHIOPIANS TO THE POINT OF CONSIDERING RETALIATORY GROUND ACTION AGAINST SOMALIA. SHOULD THE VISIT OF A U.S. TEAM OCCUR WHILE WSFF ACTIVITIES ARE UNABATED, OR COINCIDE WITH ETHIOPIAN RETALIATION, WE WOULD APPEAR TO BE SIAD'S MILITARY ALLIES IN A CAUSE FOR WHICH THERE IS WIDESPREAD DISAPPROVAL IN AFRICA (AS WAS

EVIDENCED BY POSITIONS TAKEN AT THE RECENT OAU SUMMIT).

2. A MOVE WHICH APPEARED TO PRESAGE A U.S. MILITARY LINK WITH SOMALIA, COMING AT THIS MOMENT WOULD INEVITABLY SERVE TO REINFORCE ETHIOPIAN-SOVIET/CUBAN SOLIDARITY JUST AS THOSE TIES ARE BEING STRAINED BY DIVERGENT POSITIONS OVER ETHIOPIA'S FUTURE INTERNAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND OVER THE HANDLING OF THE ERITREAN QUESTION. THESE LATTER TWO DEVELOPMENTS ARE, IN MY OPINION, AMONG THE MOST PROMISING SIGNS WE HAVE SEEN OF THE LONG TERM DIFFICULTY THE SOVIETS MAY HAVE IN MAINTAINING THEIR PRESENT POSITION IN EHTIOPIA. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT BOTH THE FRENCH AND THE ITALIANS SHARE OUR PERCEPTION OF THESE PROBLEMS.

3. IT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE ARGUED THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF VISIBLE U.S. SUPPORT SIAD'S POSITION MAY BE IN JEOPARDY OR THAT HE MAY TRY TO MOVE BACK TOWARD THE SOVIETS. THE MODERATE ARABS DESIRE FOR AMORE ACTIVE U.S. ROLE IN SOMALIA IN THE WAKE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE YEMEN WILL ALSO BE CITED. I THINK BOTH THE THREAT TO SIAD'S POSITION AND THE LIKLIHOOD OF A SWITCH BY HIM ARE BEING EXAGGERATED BY SIAD AND BY THE ARABS. IN ANY EVENT, THE DESIRABILITY OF PLEASING THE MODERATE ARABS MUST BE WEIGHED AGAINST THE CONCURRENT POLITICAL COSTS TO US WITH THE OAU AND THE LIKELY NEGATIVE CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO EVEN AN INDIRECT US INVOLVEMENT IN THE HORN CONFLICT.
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4. IN THE WAKE OF SIAD'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OGADEN EARLIER THIS YEAR WE ALL SEEMED TO HAVE RECOGNIZED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD SUCCESSFULLY EXPLOITED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF THE OAU, I.E., TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. INDEED, WHAT CREDIT WE DID RECEIVE FROM THE AFRICANS FOR OUR ROLE IN THE OGADEN EVENTS WAS DIRECTLY RELATED TO OUR RESTRAINT. IN MY VIEW WE WOULD BE RUNNING A CONSIDERABLE RISK IF WE WERE TO LOSE SIGHT OF THESE LESSONS. FINALLY, WE SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT SOMALI IRREDENTISM IS THE SINGLE MOST DESTABILIZING ELEMENT IN THE HORN, ONE WITH WHICH OUR ASSOCIATION CAN ONLY SPELL DIFFICULTY.

5. WE HAVE RIGHTLY MADE MUCH OF OUR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT AFRICAN SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN DISPUTES. SENDING THE SURVEY TEAM TO SOMALIA IS NOT LIKELY TO GIVE US ANY SIGNIFICANT DIPLOMATIC LEVERAGE WITH SIAD AND WOULD UNDERCUT THE IMAGE OF EVENHANDED ATTACHMENT TO PRINCIPLE WHICH WE SHOULD SEEK TO MAINTAIN.

6. FEW AFRICANS ARE LIKELY TO REGARD A FAILURE TO SUPPORT SIAD AS CONSTITUTING A DEFAULT OF RESPONSIBILITY ON THE PART

OF THE U.S. IF SIAD IS IN TROUBLE IT IS BECAUSE OF SOMALIA'S
OWN ACTIONS. I BELIEVE THAT WE MUST WAIT FOR SOME TRANGIBLE
INDICATION OF HIS RESPONSIVENESS TO OUR CONCERNS BEFORE WE
PROCEED WITH THE TEAM.
COHEN

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, DETENTE, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE190020
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:SVALERGA
Enclosure: REPEAT OF DAKAR 5689
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: N780006-0454
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780713/aaaaakne.tel
Line Count: 123
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1124d76b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1864092
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOMALIA MILITARY SURVEY TEAM
TAGS: MASS, OVIP, PGOV, PDEV, SO, US, UR, XF
To: USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1124d76b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014